

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 00685 120809Z

51

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCLANT

USDEL MBFR

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 0685

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, NL

SUBJECT: DEFMIN ANNOUNCES BUDGET INCREASES

REF: THE HAGUE 4789 (NOTAL)

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PAGE 02 THE HA 00685 120809Z

1. ON EVE OF DEFENSE BUDGET DEBATE IN SECOND CHAMBER

WHICH BEGINS FEB 11, DEFMIN VREDELING HAS INFORMED PARLIAMENT THAT 1975 BUDGET TO BE INCREASED BY 47.5 MILLION GULDERS (US \$19.5 MILLION) FOR PERSONNEL COSTS. INCREASE OCCASIONED BY NECESSITY MAINTAIN TROOP STRENGTH AT PRESENT LEVELS DURING MBFR TALKS RATHER THAN INSTITUTE CUTS ORIGINALLY CALLED FOR IN DUTCH DEFENSE NOTE. VREDELING'S POSITION ON REDUCTIONS IN TROOP LEVELS WAS SET OUT IN HIS JULY 9, 1974 LETTER TO PRESIDENT OF SECOND CHAMBER WHEN HE STATED, "MOREOVER, THE NETHERLANDS' PROMISE THAT THE PEACETIME STRENGTH OF THE ARMY NOT BE REDUCED AS LONG AS THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS AND HAVE NOT YET PRODUCED THE RESULTS ALSO DESIRED BY THE NETHERLANDS MEAN THAT THERE NEED BE NO FEAR OF UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS. OF COURSE A NEW SITUATION WOULD ARISE IN THE UNFORTUNATE EVENT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS FAILING. IN THAT CASE A NEW DECISION WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN".

2. NOTING THAT IN VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN VIENNA IT NOW CLEAR THAT REDUCTIONS THIS YEAR WERE IMPOSSIBLE, VREDELING HAS CONCLUDED GON MUST INCREASE ITS DEFENSE BUDGET. VREDELING ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MAINTAINING ARMY STRENGTH IN 1975 WILL DELAY CUTS PLANNED FOR 1976 AND 1977 WHICH WOULD ENTAIL EXTRA COSTS OF AN ESTIMATED 46 MILLION GULDERS (US\$ 18.6 MILLION) IN 1976 AND 13 MILLION GULDERS (US\$ 5.3 MILLION) IN 1977.

3. IN ANNOUNCING THE DEFENSE BUDGET INCREASE, VREDELING ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO REPORT THAT THE FIRST ORDER FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE NAVY'S MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT WOULD BE PLACED SOON. FIRST ORDER WILL BE FOR FOUR AIRCRAFT WITH ANOTHER NINE TO BE ORDERED LATER. THESE 13 AIRCRAFT WILL REPLACE 15 NEPTUNES NOW IN SERVICE AND ONE BREGUET-ATLANTIQUE WHICH WAS LOST. ANNOUNCEMENT OF GON READINESS TO BEGIN REPLACEMENTS IS SEEN AS A SOP TO CONFESSIONAL PARTIES IN SECOND CHAMBER WHICH HAD PUSHED THROUGH A MOTION DURING DEFENSE NOTE DEBATE IN SEPTEMBER (REFTEL) CALLING FOR ACCELERATION OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURES INTO FIRST PART OF PERIOD COVERED BY THE NOTE. AT TIME MOTION PASSED, VREDELING HAD BEEN NON-COMMITTAL ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION. DECISION TO BEGIN REPLACEMENT PROGRAM, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 THE HA 00685 120809Z

FOR WHICH HE ASKING AN ADDITIONAL 206 MILLION GULDERS (US\$ 84.4 MILLION) TO MAKE PAYMENT IN FUTURE YEARS, MAY BLUNT CONFESSIONAL AND OPPOSITION PARTIES' EFFORTS RE-OPEN QUESTION DURING BUDGET DEBATE.

4. IN A RELATED ACTION, DEFENSE STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK, TOLD SECOND CHAMBER FEBRUARY 10 THAT GON HAS EARMARKED 30 MILLION GULDERS (US \$12.3 MILLION)

FOR PURCHASE OF ELECTRONIC ANTI-MISSILE EQUIPMENT FOR AIR FORCE'S F-104S. STEMERDINK, IN REPLYING TO A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION AS TO DESIRABILITY OF EQUIPPING PLANES DUE TO BE REPLACED WITH ADVANCED SYSTEMS, SAID THAT MEASURE WAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO ENHANCING PILOT'S CHANCES OF SURVIVAL. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID, EQUIPMENT COULD BE USED IN OTHER AIRCRAFT AFTER F-104S WERE REPLACED.

5. DEFENSE BUDGET SCHEDULED FOR DEBATE FEB 11 AND FEB 13. MUCH OF DEBATE EXPECTED CENTER ON QUESTION OF F-104 REPLACEMENT. PROGRESSIVE PARTIES IN SECOND CHAMBER WILL PRESS VREDELING AND STEMERDINK FOR ASSURANCES THAT GON NOT COMMITTED TO SELECTING ONE OF COMPETING AIR BOMBAT FIGHTERS AS REPLACEMENT. IN THIS EFFORT, PROGRESSIVES WILL SEEK CREATE ATMOSPHERE FOR RE-EVALUATING DUTCH AIR FORCE TASK UNDER NATO AND REPLACEMENT OF F-104S WITH LESS EXPENSIVE AIRCRAFT DESIGNED FOR MORE LIMITED ROLE. CATHOLIC PARTY FLOOR LEADER ANDRIESEN, SPEAKING TO A PARTY MEETING IN APELDOORN FEB 10, PUT PROGRESSIVES ON NOTICE THAT HE AWARE OF THEIR MOTIVES. ANDRIESEN STATED THAT DUTCH INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS MUST BE HONORED AND POINTEDLY NOTED THAT "SOME MEMBERS OF THE PVDA (LABOR PARTY) PARLIAMENTARY GROUP WOULD BE BETTER OFF JUST FORGETTING ALL ABOUT SELECTING AN AIRCRAFT THAT DOES NOT FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS." GOULD

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